INTEGRITY OF CREATION

An Ecumenical Discussion

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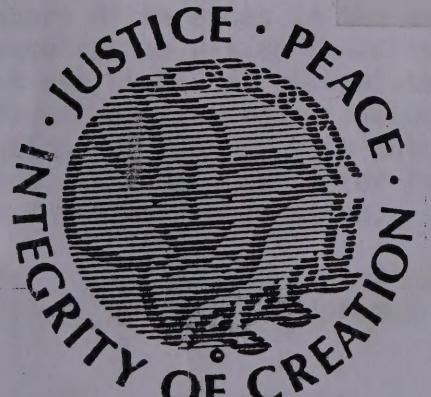

Granvollen, Norway
February 5 to March 3, 1988

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INTEGRITY OF CREATION
An Ecumenical Discussion

INTRODUCTION

The intention of this document is to engage churches, Christian groups and all people who are concerned about the integrity of creation in a process of study and action.

The study on the integrity of creation is part of a much larger process. The Vancouver Assembly of the World Council of Churches invited all churches "to engage in a conciliar process of mutual commitment (covenant) to justice, peace and the integrity of creation". While the terms justice and peace are familiar, "the integrity of creation" is new. To be sure, it includes ecological and environmental issues, but goes beyond them. Its central thrust aims at a caring attitude towards nature - an emphasis that is evident in the German "Bewahrung der Schöpfung" and in the French "sauvegarde de la création". The English "the integrity of creation" says more. It tries to bring together the issues of justice, peace and the environment by stressing the fact that there is an integrity or unity that is given in God's creation.

An ecumencial consultation was held from February 25 to March 3, 1988 in Granvollen, Norway, to explore the meaning of the term the integrity of creation. This document sets out the results of that consultation. There were about fifty participants at this meeting from the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant churches from all parts of the world. There were representatives from other faiths - Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh. There were also Christian Indigenous People. During the first three days there were presentations from various perspectives on the understanding of creation and the threats to creation. The Prime Minister of Norway, Gro Harlem Brundtland, who was the moderator of the World Commission on Environment and Development, gave the key-note address. During the next four days, the participants divided themselves into five small groups to probe the insights and issues that emerged.

There were many points of agreement. There were also many disagreements. Not least of these was the question of how one does theology. Some thought that one should first examine biblical and Christian theological traditions on the doctrine of creation and then work out the implications for dealing with the critical issues of our time. Others argued that one should begin with the critical issues and then address them theologically. Given the plurality of faith traditions and theological viewpoints at the consultation, there were also sharp differences in the understanding of the "integrity of creation". The consultation was an exercise in conciliarity - to listen and to be heard so that positions and viewpoints may be in conversation with each other. In a significant way the consultation tried to be inclusive without lessening the particular emphasis of each entry into what is meant by the integrity of creation. To have strived for less would have been to betray the very concern of the integrity of creation.

Yet, the document is not exhaustive on all aspects of the Christian doctrine of creation. Neither does it cover all the aspects that could be

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included under the topic of the integrity of creation. It is tentative and exploratory. Its primary concern is to provide ways of entering into an ongoing discussion and to provide "windows" into what is meant by the integrity of creation. It is, therefore, a paper for discussion and not a position paper to be endorsed by the churches.

EXPERIENCES OF BROKENNESS ... YEARNINGS FOR WHOLENESS

My name is Anna. I am from the Marshall Islands. My people have traditionally treasured our lands and lagoons - sources of our food. My people are a sharing people who live in close interdependence, not only with one another, but also with our atoll homes. Now, however, we are troubled. Many of our young people see no future in life. Our land no longer feeds us. The more we eat of its fruit and the fish in our lagoons the sicker we become. What has happened to my people? What has happened to our land?

From 1946 to 1958 nuclear tests were held in our atolls. Some of these atolls have simply disappeared. Others are still slowly releasing radioactivity into our waters. While our older people are still suffering from radiation sickness, many of our children have genetic defects. We women feel this particularly; we think of our children.

More recently, we have been moved from some of our atolls and crowded together on Ebeye Atoll in order that our atolls could be testing grounds for advanced weapon systems. We have no traditional link with this new land; part of our identity has been taken away. Our dwelling place is overcrowded. We are poor. Our lagoon is a source of disease, not life. Yes, much has happened to our people. Much has happened to our land.

This story gives dramatic witness to the consequences of humanity's attempt to "master" creation: destruction of fish, forests and atolls; pollution of land and waterways; displacement of people from their sacred lands; injury, disease, suffering and death to innocent people. It also draws our attention to the interconnectedness of the issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. The story also shows the "structures of sin" that have assumed power over people and the whole of creation.

Throughout its history, humankind has known the tension between living in relation with creation and seeking to master it. However, in the modern era in Western civilization, and especially through the scientific revolution, the relationship to creation has fundamentally changed. Since the marriage of science and technology in the Industrial Revolution, Western culture has presumed "mastery" over creation as its God-given right and duty. Nurtured by the Englightenment, this presumed prerogative has radically transformed human life and culture and affected the rest of creation. At the most visible level, this transformation is evident in developments in such areas as transportation, various forms of energy, architecture, health care, technology, communcation, fertilization, biochemistry, weaponry, the modern computer and much more. At more subtle, but no less important levels, the transformation is evident in ideas and ideologies that undergird political and

economic systems, values and morality, relationships among and between cultures , relationships among and between nations, between people and the creation.

To be sure, science and technology have done much to enhance the quality of life. However, many of these achievements have also seriously affected the earth's ecosphere, threatening its capacity to support life and have put God's creation in great peril.

The drive to have "mastery" over creation has resulted in the senseless exploitation of natural resources, the alienation of the land from people and the destruction of indigenous cultures. It ignores the experiences of oppressed peoples like the Blacks and women who suffer under its weight. It also undermines other highly developed systems of scientific, religious and philosophical thought. For example, Western medicine as it developed and spread over the world began to supplant indigenous systems of medicine which have a more holistic approach to health care and healing.

With the industrial mode has come a world view that looks on creation as manageable and at the disposal of human beings. It is a world view that does not respect humanity's dependence on the earth as mother and as the source of life and nourishment. Instead, it views the earth as something to be used and owned by a few, and "mastered" so as to maximize profits for a few. It is the power of ownership, the power to manipulate and control that is the basis of the industrial profit-centered mode of development. Earlier, Western science and technology with an industrial mindset made colonization possible, both internally and in relation to nations in the South. Now the mind-set of science and technology has become a universal mode, and has led to a militarization of the globe and a dangerous arms race that threatens many parts of the world.

Governments and ruling groups in the South have also adopted similiar views out of self-interest and to maximize their profits. Some of the consequences are the grabbing of land from and the denial of property rights to Indigenous Peoples; the control of educational and religious institutions to propagate an ideology of submission; and a relative disregard for human and all other created life.

The development of this universal industrial mindset must be seen in relation to the growth in Western culture of a philosophy of dualism, which affirms a radical divide between spirit and matter, soul and body, male and female.

Over the centuries, this dualistic philosophy has played a significant role in many Christian theologies, resulting in a belief in a hierarchy of values or in a theory of a chain-of-being that absolutizes human-centered and male-centered creation. The hierarchical view of creation puts women and the rest of creation in a position of powerlessness - to be owned, exploited and violated. Many churches and Christians also subscribe to this world view and uncritically support the economic and political forces which reinforce this world view.

Furthermore, the churches by their divisions reflect the brokenness of the reation. The churches have failed to uphold creation's integrity as a primary ood and to reflect this unity within their own life. In our time, the church eeds to discover its contemporary response as a co-creator with the ransforming power of God in a covenant and commitment for justice, peace and he integrity of creation.

Therefore, we celebrate at this time the actions of those who embrace holeness, and mention the following as representative of many others:

We celebrate the life affirming actions of Christians who participate in ovements for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

We celebrate the women and men who through symbolic actions, like the Day f the Tree celebrated in Benin, raise the awareness of their communities to he strength of united action.

We celebrate the Chipko and Apiko movements in India where women protect ith their own bodies the trees that are to be cut down by logging companies.

We celebrate the actions of the Christians in the Philippines who hinder y protest actions the transportation of trees by logging companies exploiting he forest resources.

We celebrate the sharing and solidarity women experience in global cumenical movements like the World Day of Prayer and the Fellowship of the east Coin, in which they focus on issues of justice, peace and the integrity f creation, and make networks of commitment to work for the wholeness of reation.

We celebrate the actions of church groups and other movements particularly n Europe and North America who have taken up the concern to reduce pollution nd to care for the earth. In particular, we commend the efforts of those who eek the reduction of the causes of acid rain, the prevention of the poisoning f ground waters through chemical fertilization of farmlands, and the limination of nuclear and other hazardous wastes.

The experiences of brokenness and yearnings for wholeness are evident verywhere. Perspectives from the experiences of women, Indigenous Peoples, he ecological struggle, the "second world" and Peoples of other Faiths are iven both to show the pervasiveness of the concern for the integrity of reation and to indicate the variety of ways in which this concern is xpressed.

A Perspective from the Experiences of Women

> On December 1984, in Bhopal, India, 10,000 men, women and children (according to an unofficial UNICEF assessment) died when the highly toxic MIC (Methyl Isocyanate) gas escaped from the Union Carbide factory, converting the city into a gas chamber. It is estimated that another 40,000 people were seriously injured and a further 200,000 badly affected by partial or complete blindness,

mental illness, pulmonary and gynaecological diseases with an increase in the number of abortions and stillbirths. Two years later, reports of the far reaching effects of this tragedy on the population of that city are still coming in. Other forms of life have also been affected. The report is: Creation was broken!

Voices of women speak of the impact the disintegration of creation has had particularly on their lives.

When land, air and water are polluted and poisoned, women and children, particularly unborn children, are usually the first to be affected. As the earth is hurt by radioactivity from Chernobyl and Three Mile Island; by acid rain in Europe and North America; by the use of fertilizers and pesticides; by industrial chemicals; or by drought, floods, desertification and deforestation, women also suffer as they try to provide healthy and sufficient food for themselves and their families.

There is a saying that "when sister earth suffers, women suffer too". Violence against nature is violence against women. The reverse is also true; violence against women is violence against nature. Women, like nature, are vulnerable to violation. They too can be treated as objects to be used, abused or manipulated. Their sexuality and labour can be exploited. When the earth, the sea, the air, the forests are violated, women also bear the brunt of it. Creation is broken!

Both women and creation can be owned by men, objectified and treated as "the other", subjugated and used for male dominated hierarchies. This has been the prominent philosophy on which the industrial mindset has operated. It has affected the lives of women in all parts of the globe, be it in the North or the South, the East or the West, although there are differences in the levels of oppression women experience in different contexts. In those states which assure a system of social support for women, and especially for mothers of young children, some of the worst effects of industrialism upon women are being partially ameliorated. The oppression of the majority of women caused by the industrial mind-set is aggravated by various forms of religious and cultural oppression.

The increasing professionalism and industrialisation of health care provide a particularly horrendous example of the violence done to the women of the South. These are used as guinea-pigs for the testing of drugs of unproven safety such as "injectable contraceptives". Drugs banned in the countries of their origin are used on these unsuspecting women. They are considered as objects; and their bodies "used", as nature is "used".

Women, too, are not free from this industrial mind-set. They also participate in the exploitation and abuse of other human beings, of other forms of life, and the environment. In subsistance economies, where basic human survival is at stake, women unwittingly add to the brokeness of creation. When a poor woman's double day's work is further lengthened with the need to search for safe food and water, fuel and fodder, already scarce resources are further depleted without thought given to the protection of the environment.

Women and men are called to ~~in~~ defend the creation and to heal its brokenness. This call is rooted in hope - a consciousness of the creative and continuous presence of God in the world. This hope is like that of the women who set out on a journey of faith to the grave of Jesus on Easter morning. They anticipated obstacles. "Who will roll away the stone?" Yet, they presisted on the journey, and met the risen Christ. The hope has as its basis faith in the risen Christ.

We are called to actualize this hope in concrete ways. Specifically, we are called to resist the threats to life and to continue to bear new life inspite of oppression and the apparent hopelessness of situations.

We are called to celebrate the mystery of creation. To recognize God's living presence in and around us made known in continuous acts of creation inspite of the threats to life. The mystery of creation must be expressed in language and metaphor that arises out of the experience of women and speaks to women in different cultural contexts. Our image of God is dynamic. It is the image of sharing love that finds expression in the redeeming and healing presence of Jesus Christ. On the cross, Jesus is seen as one who shares his life making whole what is broken. In his resurrection is our hope.

A Perspective from the Experiences of Indigenous Peoples

My name is Mamani. I am an Aymara Indian from Bolivia. Seventy percent of the Bolivian population are Indians from the Aymara or Quechua tribes. Only 30 percent are Spanish or other immigrants. Yet, since the invasion five centuries ago, ruling power has been held by this minority. We have been subjugated and oppressed.

For all of these five centuries we have been exploited by the colonial power as it extracted minerals from its new territories and made great profits. At first, we worked the mines as slaves; then as very cheap labour. Because of the working conditions, many millions of Indian workers have died in the mines. Recently this crisis has become even worse. In 1986 under Governmental Decree 21060, the National Mining Company was privatized, new technologies were imported, resulting in 200,000 Indians losing their jobs and further increasing the number of unemployed Indians. Bolivia's huge national debt also adds to the oppression of Native Peoples.

I see two contending nations in Bolivia. On the one hand, the immigrant minority, identifying itself as Christian, maintains an ideology of accumulation, domination and oppression. We Indians, on the other hand, believe that the gifts of creation should benefit all and that consumption should be limited to what is necessary.

In 1978 I became the first indigenous bishop of the Methodist Church in Bolivia. Our church is struggling to understand itself as both Indian and Christian. For this

> reason you must understand our traditional view of creation in order to understand us. The whole of nature was created by Pacha Mama, the cosmic God, who guarantees the continuity and harmony of creation. The God of salvation revealed in an anthropomorphic manifestation is Wiracocha. The first time our ancestors saw the bearded Spanish, they called them Wiracochas. But Pacha Mama, the Eternal Mother, is a more maternal human expression. In recent discoveries of the huge construction of the Tiawanaco civilization, the sun and its warmth can be seen as the source of human life.
>
> Our Aymara communities, and those of all Andean Native Peoples, are participatory. Our sense of community extends to the relationship between people and all of creation. It includes safeguarding the harmony of nature. If the churches are really concerned for the integrity of creation, then they will have to recover a gospel that is good news for all of creation.

Some estimate Indigenous Peoples to be roughly one quarter of the world's population. By Indigenous Peoples are meant tribal people who have traditional world-views which underscore attempts to live in harmonious and sane ways with the whole of creation. Some examples of Indigenous Peoples are the American Indians, the Dalits and tribals of India, Maoris and other Pacific Islanders, Aboriginal Australians, Africans and tribal Asians.

Inspite of their numbers, Indigenous Peoples are too easily overlooked. Even the international language categories of first, second and third worlds do not include Indigenous Peoples. They are imposed upon culturally; and they are systematically oppressed.

All over the world, Indigenous Peoples continue to suffer from persistent attempts by powerful governments and corporate interests to take their lands. Indigenous Peoples live in dynamic relationship with their lands. They conceive of the people belonging to the land and not the land belonging to the people. Such an attitude makes them easily vulnerable to interests that work with Western notions of the ownership of land. Furthermore, because of the close relationship between land and people, the expropriation of the lands of Indigenous Peoples is also an attack on their cultures, religions and systems of value.

Even the Indigenous Peoples who live on their own lands are not free. Unjust economic policies have been introduced to protect industries that continue to pollute the land, the water and the air of the Indigenous Peoples. Agrobusiness in the South has led to the destruction of entire forests. The Indigenous Peoples in Latin America are being forced by the rich to plant marijuana and coca which are then sold at high prices overseas. In some other places, Indigenous Peoples are forced to plant only cash crops which are sold to settle payments for external debts. Strip mining, hunting safaris and whaling are other examples of the ruthless intervention in the lives of Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples experience all these as the disintegration of creation.

Indigenous Peoples also experience the disintegration of creation in the lienation caused by systems of education and imposed foreign values which are ften advocated by churches. The consequent disintegration is evident in high nemployment. For instance, up to 95% in some Nothern American Indian eservations are unemployed. Extended family structures also disintegrate and raditional family values are destroyed. While all Indigenous Peoples are ffected, the forced separation of husbands and wives in the Southern Africa ork situation is perhaps the most dramatic.

Like other Indigenous Peoples, African peoples also have a relationship f mutual obligation with creation. African peoples play a very active role in aring for the creation and in teaching the young to care for and respect reation and to maintain relations in community. In Africa, right relations eans justice. Right relations promote mutuality and control over the misuse f power. Women and men in everyday life exercise these values, and failure to lo so is deemed a disgrace to the whole community. The roots for exploitation nd domination of nature and humanity in Africa are in Western cultural mperialism. The rupture and destruction of African cultures have robbed frica of its identity.

At stake in the oppression of Indigenous Peoples is the balance and holeness of all creation. The devastation of the earth is inextricably bound p with the devastation of peoples. The destruction of Indigenous Peoples estroys a fundamental base of spiritual strength and understanding of reation. It is an understanding which still knows the spiritual nterrelatedness of all things visible and invisible. This rich spiritual nderstanding can become a source of renewed strength and rootedness for all people, especially for Christians in their understanding of the Gospel.

For the sake of all creation, theology must begin with creation. Just as concerned Christian people have begun to learn that true peace can only be realized through the establishment of justice and that peace flows naturally out of justice, so now we must begin to learn that justice and then peace flow naturally out of a deep respect for all of creation. Thus for Indigenous Peoples a much more theologically sound expression would be "CREATION, JUSTICE AND PEACE". Not only is this more satisfying to Indigenous theology, but such a title suddenly begins to reflect the theological content and sequence of the ancient ecumenical creeds of Christianity.

We must now clearly understand that justice is the maintenance of the wholeness of creation. Justice involves the righting of relationships not only between human beings, but between human beings and the earth and the things of the earth. Our concept of justice must shift away from being that which protects possessions towards that which provides healing of relationships between human beings, between cultures, and between human beings and all of creation. The Indigenous concept of justice is such a process of healing. If we begin with the perception of ourselves as a part of the wholeness of creation and if we understand justice as the practice of human beings in maintaining the interrelatedness of all creation, then peace will flow naturally.

The dilemna of Indigenous Peoples is that at times their only hope appears to be participation in the modern industrial world, which has also

become the source of their destruction. There seems to be no way to exist apart from that system; yet that system is what kills them. They are oppressed by it; but even as they turn toward it as a source of salvation, they become their own oppressors. There is a yearning for the totality and wholeness of creation among Indigenous Peoples. Yet, they too become destroyers of that wholeness as they struggle to ensure their own survival, hemmed in by economic structures which only begin to reward them when they also participate in the devastation of their own relatedness to the earth.

In the Gospel of Mark Jesus proclaims: "The time is fulfilled. The Kingdom of God is near. Repent, and believe the Gospel" (Mk. 1:15). In this context it is more and more clear that the Kingdom of God is not merely a relationship between human beings and God that has happened or will happen at a particular time. Rather, the Kingdom of God is the space where God reigns. It must be understood as a metaphor for all of creation. In this context repentance (metanoia) must be informed by the Old Testament notion of repentance as a "return" (shub). It is a return to God and to the space where God reigns as Creator, that is, to a proper relationship of creatures to Creator. It is a return that brings one back into harmony and balance with God and with the rest of creation. Thus repentance opens new possibilities for understanding ourselves and our place in creation. For Indigenous Peoples repentance must involve a return to their spiritual source, that is to their land. To block this aspiration of Indigenous Peoples is to keep them in their sin.

An Ecological Perspective

My name is Junior and I am from St. Vincent and the Grenadines. Among many Christian people in several Caribbean islands, including my country, it is a tradition to eat crayfish as the main source of protein on Good Friday. This means large numbers of people converge on the rivers on Holy Thursday.

The rivers are open to the public. No government control exists on fresh water fishing. People catch more than they need and the species has been substantially depleted. Of late, the old method of fishing has given place to the technique of spreading tobacco and other poisonous substances in the river which drug the fish making it easier to catch them. What is not caught is left to die and pollute the water. The species is fast becoming extinct. Yet this religious custom prevails. Neither the churches nor the governments pay much attention to the problem.

My name is Gerhard. Towards the end of the revolutionary 1960s I became a member of a group

of sensitive ecological people from the Evangelical Church of the FRG. As a concrete commitment to the ecological issue, we started using recycled paper. It saves wood, energy, and water; lessens pollution and the amount of waste by-products. First we began to use recycled paper for ourselves. Then we spread the message asking others also to use it. But we have faced big barriers. We were told that people like white paper. Copy machines start "coughing" with recycled paper. It is too expensive. We were told, "You use recycled paper, if you must, but leave us alone." However, we did not give in.

Neither were we discouraged. We continued the struggle. We felt that if there is a real demand in the market, then these problems will disappear. It was urgent that we create the need. We started with our immediate situation, namely, the church offices. Now we see the results of our persistence. For example, my church, the Church of Baden, uses recycled paper for 2/3 of its paper needs for copy paper, envelopes, computer paper, etc.

At the present time the land base of the earth is being threatened by deforestation and desertification, thus destroying the productive capacity and genetic resources of vast areas of the earth. In East Africa, for example, the search for firewood, the chief energy resource for millions of people, combined with the overgrazing of marginal lands is causing the desert to expand and the soil to deteriorate in ways that may be irreversible.

In addition, it is estimated that forests in less-developed countries will be depleted by 40 per cent by the year 2000. By 2020, less than two generations from now, nearly all accessible forests in the two-thirds world will have been cut. This situation is especially critical for the tropical rain forests in South America.

Equally important, deforestation is causing the dramatic extinction of plant and insect species. Some scientists estimate that one species of plant or animal life becomes extinct from the earth every hour. All of this depletes the genetic resources and biological diversity that are fundamental for nurturing the process of life.

The situation is equally precarious with the earth's water resources. In a number of countries, the availability of water per person for the year 2000 is projected to be "very low". Some of the countries identified as facing this crisis are South Korea, Syria, countries on the Arabian Peninsula, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco and Jamaica. Most worldwide use of water is for irrigation. But, while making land fertile to grow food, irrigation also causes negative side effects now being experienced globally. All water contains salt. As the irrigated water evaporates, the salt in the water either remains in the soil or works into the ground water. The increasing salinity of

remains in the soil or works into the ground water. The increasing salinity of the water and the land is reducing crop yields in numerous Third World countries by 50 percent.

Water for drinking has also become a global problem. The World Health Organization recently reported that in 88 countries in the South 77 percent of the people are not being adequately served.

Air that is clean, breathable, and capable of regnerating the creation could also be in short supply in the years ahead. There are presently concerns over three threats to the earth's atmosphere: the rising level of carbon dioxide, the depletion of the ozone layer in the upper atmosphere, and the increase of acid rain throughout the globe.

In the light of these realities, the Church must engage technology at its source and not merely at its consequences. This is costly and difficult work. Technology is not neutral or value free; it is as much an ideology as it is a tool of science. It has in fact become an instrument of power and is itself trapped in vast networks of power which are complex, systemic, often multinational, and exists primarily to maximize profit. In New Testament terms "principalities and powers" have gripped our world, which means our struggle with the misuse of science and technology is essentially a religious one. It also means that the churches' concern for the integrity of creation is more a matter of justice and peace than development aid or charity. From a biblical perspective, justice is the rendering of whatever is required for the fullest possible flourishing of creation. That which makes for wholeness in nature, in the human psyche and in human society is just. Biblically speaking peace is shalom. Shalom, in fact, is shorthand for all God's hopes and dreams for the creation. Peace is shared abundance and full health throughout the world. It is well-being extended to all creatures so that life is without debilitating fear. As the prophet Isaiah has taught us, the result of righteousness is peace. It is tranquility, serenity and the assurance that no people's security is purchased at the expense of any other people. And it is more. Peace means bread, rice and dance.

Empowered by this vision, the churches, in solidarity with all people of good will, are called to make manifest God's justice for humanity and creation, and to struggle for the transformation of the powers that hold both in bondage. We are painfully aware that we are party to these destructive powers. Yet, we are summoned to witness to the victory of Christ and the freedom from every form of death that he has won for us and the whole creation. That victory invites our active hope for a new day and a new order of things, when all creation is integrated, and every creature lives in joyful community with every other creature (Jer. 31:31-34; Col. 1:15-20).

Human action alone cannot bring this promised new day to fulfillment. It is essentially God's work to be accomplished in God's own time. But in the Spirit, God calls the churches to re-present Christ in the world as "the first fruits of the new creation" (James 1:18). Such witness must be in word and action and will necessarily move the churches to engage "the powers" of the world which remain unconverted (1 Cor. 2:6-8). This is costly, difficult and for the most part unfamiliar work. The churches have barely begun to understand the pervasiveness, the inner aspects and interdependence of the

conomic, political and technological structures (powers) that hold creation
n bondage. What we do know, however, is that we have been given the task of
ncarnating the manifold wisdom of God to the powers for the world's
ransformation (Eph. 3:10).

Comment from a "Second World" Perspective

While the societies in socialist countries ("second world") share many
ommon ecological concerns and problems with societies in the industrially
eveloped market economy societies, their situations have their own
pecificities. These need to be taken into account and given special attention
ithin the framework of the JPIC process. The areas of difference are given
elow:

) The ideological orientation and re-orientation now going on through the
rocess of "New Thinking" and Perestroika seeks to renew the ideological roots
f socialist societies in Marxist-Leninism. This process has its own special
mpact on people in socialist countries.

) The political structures of planning and the centralized control of the
roduction process and of technological development raise different kinds of
uestions in the socialist context.

) The impact of market forces and of the world market on the industrial
rocess in socialist countries raises different ecological issues.

) In the usual classification of North and South countries, socialist
ountries are included in the category of the "North". However, there are
ignificant differences in the way socialist countries relate to the "South".

) The role and responsibility of Christian churches in these socialist
ountries are also understood differently; and they have their own specific
roblems.

Perspectives from People of Other Faiths

As Christians we share the earth with persons of many different faiths,
ideologies and cultures. We are part of a common human family. We recognize
that many of the issues that concern us as Christians and as churches can be
resolved only in partnership with persons of other faiths and convictions. The
encounter with people of other faiths sharpens our awareness to other ways of
understanding the relationship between humanity, nature and God. These can
enrich our understanding and, at times, help us to reformulate our views. It
is with this concern in mind that we listen to the significance of the
integrity of creation from other faith perspectives.

We recognize the common scriptural and spiritual heritage we have with
Jews and Muslims. We share with them our biblical vision of creation as
belonging to God, who created and ordered it. All these three traditions speak
of the intrinsic value of creation, of the special relationship in which the
whole created order stands before God, and of the special place of human
beings as persons appointed by God to care for God's creation.

While recognizing a special place of human beings in creation, Judaism also emphasizes the fact that the special place accorded to human beings in the creation does not permit abuse or inappropriate "mastery" over the rest of creation. Jewish tradition has maintained time and again that Israel's vision of the non-human aspects of creation requires people to care for and serve other creatures (see, for example, Genesis 2:15). Care for the earth itself is reflected in the Sabbatical year and Jubilee laws. Scriptures even include laws for the protection of trees, preventing them from being cut when besieging enemy cities (Deuteronomy 20:19).

Jewish teaching firmly states that the whole of creation is God's. God is the primordial Creator, Sustainer, and is the One who renews creation. Indeed, certain texts from Jewish sacred writings (for example the creation Psalms) can help other peoples of faith to understand the Jewish teaching on the creation, and can serve as a basis for dialogue with the Jewish community about biblical visions of creation.

Islam also affirms that the whole creation is the working of God. The central concept of Islam is tawheed or the unity of God. Allah is unity; and His unity is also reflected in the unity of humankind and the unity of humanity and nature. Humankind's role on earth is that of a khalifa, viceregent or trustee of God, who is accountable to God for the trusteeship granted by God. A wanton, careless and wasteful use of creation is sin against the Creator. An irreverent attitude to the creation, even in the slaying of an animal for food, is to militate against God's holy will.

Significantly Sikhism also emphasises the absolute dependence of creation on God. "For countless ages" says Guru Nanak, "there was utter misty darkness. There was neither day, nor night, no moon, no sun, but the Lord sat alone in a deep trance..."(AG. 1035). Then God created the universe of which humankind is a part. Human beings stand along with the rest of creation before God and depend on God for their being.

In the Buddha's teaching humanity functions in mutual interdependence with all creation. Human beings are intricately related to all sentient beings in a continuum of consciousness, but are special in that they are able to exercise will. Because of this, every human being, regardless of race, class, or sex has the potential for spiritual awakening and should be encouraged and supported towards that end. A skillful relation with creation is instrumental to spiritual awakening. Thus, human beings should respect all creation and respond to it with "humble harmlessness" (ahimsa) and compassion. There is no "just" violence in Buddhism.

In relating to the earth it is important to obtain a "right livelihood", a means of earning a living which is neither destructive nor causes suffering to self or others. Lawfully earned wealth should be used only as a means to provide supporting conditions for spiritual development for oneself and practising generosity to others, including animals.

Hinduism identifies God with the deepest level of existence in all things, the self or atman. Since God is one and invisible, he/she constitutes the fundamental principle of unity which runs through all creation. If we are united at the deepest levels of ourselves with God, we will have a profound

nd challenging justification for ahimsa or non-violence as a way of living. ll beings should be treated as oneself because we do share a single self in od. We need to be reconciled with creation through a vision of the unity of ll that exists in God. It involves in the words of the Bhagavadgita "the erception of God in all things and all things in God" (6:30). This outlook rovides the basis for a celebrative love of creation, a reverence for life in ll its forms and an unselfish way of sharing its blessings.

The Hindu affirmation of the fundamental unity of all existence has as ts corollary the truth of life's interdependence. If a vision of life prompts sense of compassion for all that exists, our appreciation of life's nterdependence reminds us of our obligations to the rest of creation. We are ndebted to non-human life forms and the inanimate world. These must also be he objects of our compassion, the recipients of our love and beneficiaries of ur service. The Hindu principle of mutual obligation is based on individual ife as an integral and interrelated part of all life. The uniqueness of the uman being lies only in our ability to discover and celebrate life's unity in od through all that we do.

As Christians and churches we share a common concern for the creation ith our neighbours of other faiths. To dialogue with them is to rediscover nd lift up those traditions within each of our faith perspectives that affirm he intrinsic value of creation and the intimate interdependence of life. We hen discover areas where there is much scope for mutual enrichment and orrection, as well as areas for collaboration and cooperation on many ontemporary issues related to creation. The 'Integrity of Creation' is a subject on which there is much scope for dialogue and mutual learning among the religious traditions of humankind.

BIBLICAL-THEOLOGICAL VISION ....THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION

The experiences, struggles and theology expressed above make certain things clear.

First, these viewpoints are windows into understanding the integrity of creation. Certainly there are many more. Christians in different settings throughout the world will bring a variety of experiences and insights to deepen the understanding of this challenge.

Second, in each of these perspectives, the links of the integrity of creation with justice and peace are clearly evident. This underscores biblical and theological truth. Thus, we find an inter-section of two approaches to the churches' commitment to the integrity of creation. Theological affirmation, rooted in the credal understandings of the church through the ages and drawn from biblical resources, joins the theology of Christians who discover from their particular experiences that the integrity of creation, justice, and peace are three aspects of one reality - God's intention for the world.

Third, the perspectives of Christians engaged in the struggle for creation's integrity challenge the church to deepen its theological and

biblical understanding at this point. Our task here is to engage our rich theological traditions with the contemporary and profound crisis threatening creations' integrity. A solid foundation in the biblical and theological understanding of the integrity of creation will help enable the churches to speak, act and respond with power.

Biblical Theological Perspectives on Creation

Our world is broken. The creation groans. We ourselves groan with it. We recognize the pervasive power of sin, both in us as persons, and in the structures which shape our existence. But the Risen Christ is victor over sin and death. And sin shall not triumph.

In our task ahead, we Christians need some clear biblical-theological perspectives for our orientation. We are not the first to embark on this theological task, and should be aware of possible mistakes in approach and attitude. We list some of these:

(a) Reductionism in theology - reducing the Gospel to a personal salvation, with emphasis on the eternal destiny of the human soul, ignoring God's work in the world; and sometimes suggesting that if persons are converted, all problems would resolve themselves;

(b) Scientific-technological hybris, persuading us that the ecological crisis is a technical problem to be solved purely by technical methods; ignoring its wider ramifications in justice and peace, in the sinful structures of human existence and in human greed and mindless industrial development;

(c) Romantic response reflected in the 'back to nature' approach, nostalgic for a return to a pre-technological way of life, ignoring the God-given dynamism of science/technology as a force to be brought under human control rather than to be escaped from,

(d) A neo-apocalyptic approach which sees the ecological crisis as harbinger of the end of the world, rather than as a judgment of God calling us to repentance and the mending of our ways;

(e) The utopian response which seeks unrealistic, naive and fanciful pictures of a perfect and problemless world in history; failing to recognize the structures of sin which will continue to menace us even without the ecological crisis;

(f) The fatalist response which is a combination of indifference and despair, and says: "After all, we can't do anything about it!"

(g) The "other people's problem" response which can be seen in parts of the world where people take the ecocrisis to be a problem of advanced industrial societies and see a false alternative or priority between the demands of justice and the need to sustain the biosphere.

Theological Heritage

Creation as God's Gift

Creation came into being by the will and love of the Triune God, and as
ch it possesses an inner cohesion and goodness. Though human eyes may not
ways discern it, every creature and the whole creation in chorus bear
tness to the glorious unity and harmony with which the creation is endowed.
d when our human eyes are opened and our tongues unloosed, we too learn how
praise and participate in the life, love, power and freedom that is God's
ntinuing gift and grace.

God is the "Creator of all things" (I Cor. 8:6; Rom. 11:36). Christ is
e one "through whom all things were made" (John 1:3), I Cor. 8:6; Heb. 1:2).
e Holy Spirit is "the Lord, the Giver of Life" (The
ceno-Constantinopolitan Creed). If we speak of creation's "integrity", this
st be our point of departure. We ourselves are not the ones who 'integrate'
eation; its integration is prior to our concern, prior to our participation.
e integrity of creation is the work of the One who creates, redeems and
nctifies it. It is precisely that work that we have in mind when we speak of
he integrity of
eation' and our role in it.

'Creation out of Nothing'

A long tradition of the faith affirms that the world was created 'out of
othing' (ex nihilo), and not out of pre-existent matter. This doctrine
revents us from confusing God with the created reality. It finds expression,
or instance, in the Second Book of Maccabees, "Beholding the heavens and the
arth, and seeing all that is there, you will understand that God has created
t all from nothing," (7:28).

We find that this doctrine also contains for us today an important nuance
f meaning. For it implies that creation is not to be taken for granted. It is
lways in danger of regressing into oblivion and chaos. Human greed,
xploitation and gross irresponsibility have unleashed forces of
isintegration which threaten the very life of the world. Today, evidence of
hese forces are plainly visible.

The Reintegration of Creation

In and through the incarnation of the divine word, humanity and the whole
creation are enabled to taste 'new life'. The old realities are still with us,
and our consciousness of their negating and alienating power keeps us from
presumption and the loss of vigilance, but they do not cause us to despair.
For, through the sacrificial death and liberating victory of Christ, God has
inaugurated the reintegration of this broken world. In his own person, Jesus
Christ examplifies the glorious destiny of a transfigured creation.

The Intrinsic Worth of all Living Beings

The creation is good intrinsically. It is not only our human valuation

(which is all too tenuous) that renders creation "good". Creation is good in and of itself as God's own intention and work.

This applies to all the beings, animate and inanimate, made by God and not only (or even especially) to humanity. The world of sea and forest, desert and fertile field, with its myriad creatures became, after all, the very context of the incarnation of the word.

In the Reign that has been initiated by God's reintegrative work in Jesus Christ, and is continued through the sanctifying presence of the divine Spirit, all creatures have their rightful place. They may live in harmony one with another, a "peaceable Kingdom". This, we recognize, is a matter of "faith, not sight"; yet it is the eschatological reality to which our faith points us, as it is also the basis of our sacramental life and the substance of our hope for a transformed natural and social order.

The Biblical Vision

In the Bible, the whole of creation renders praise and gratitude to the Creator. Unlike anthropocentric views which ascribe value to the environment only because of its satisfying of human need, biblical perspectives underscore creation's goodness because it is the work of God. For this reason, all parts of the creation are described as giving God praise and glory with joy.

In Psalm 148, for instance, the sun, moon and stars, fire and hail, snow and frost, mountains, fruit trees, cedars, beasts, and cattle, all of them are invited to praise God from the heavens and the earth. Many Psalms echo this truth. In Psalm 96:1, all the earth "sings to the Lord". And later we read, "Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall the trees of the wood sing for joy before the Lord ..." (v. 11-12) (see also Psalm 97:1,6, Psalm 19:1, etc.)

The Book of Job contains one of the Bible's most powerful descriptions of God's intimate action in bringing forth and sustaining all the dimensions of creation' life. Found in chapters 38 through 42:6, God's answer to Job comes as a series of questions poetically stressing God's presence in all the creation. "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding ... Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place ... Have you comprehended the expanse of the earth? Declare, if you know all this ... From whose womb did the ice come forth, and who has given birth to the hoarfrost of heaven ..." (Job 38:4,12,18,29). Job responds "Behold, I am of small account; what shall I answer thee? I lay my hand on my mouth" (40:4). Contrary to some presumed attitudes of humanity's dominant role over the earth, this vision compels a stance of humble awe and wonder. In this picture, the majesty of the creation disarms human arrogance and self-sufficiency.

Continually, biblical passages point to the ongoing activity of God in sustaining and upholding each dimension of the creation. The rich descriptions in Psalm 104, for example, portray the interdependence of the created order, which lives by the breath or Spirit of God (v. 29ff). In this Psalm, the Spirit of God is the source of life of all creatures, and not only humans.

In the wisdom literature of the Bible, the Creation itself speaks as the isdom of God:

> "Listen. Wisdom is calling out. Reason is making herself heard...
>
> The Lord created me at the beginning of his work
> the first of his acts of old.
> Ages ago I was set up at the first, before the earth began,
> Before he made the earth with its fields
> or the first of the dust of the world,
> when he established the heavens,
> I was there ...
> I was beside him, like a master workman
> I was daily his delight
> rejoicing before him always
> rejoicing in his inhabited world
> and delighting in the children of humanity".
>
> Proverbs 8:1, 22-32 RSV
> (see also Prov. 3:19-20)

In the Bible, wisdom (hochmah in Hebrew, sophia in Greek) is female, epresenting reason and delight, a source of rejoicing to God and to all umanity. The Genesis passages on creation should be read in conjunction with hese other passages, including the visions of Isaiah (ch 11; 45:18ff; 5:17ff).

The opening chapters of Genesis have served as primary resources for the eflection of the church regarding the role of humanity, creation and God. In articular, attention has focused on Genesis 1:26-28, and the second and third hapters of Genesis. This biblical focus often used exclusively by some church traditions, has prevented the church from discovering the full biblical vision regarding the integrity of creation.

In Genesis 1:26-28, we find a vision of humanity's role of "dominion" within the created order. Such dominion, however, refers specifically to the task of upholding God's purposes in the creation, rather than imposing humanity's self-serving ends. In Gen. 2:15 we also find the legitimate interpretation of "dominion": humanity is "to serve and keep the earth".

Further, creation of humanity "in the image of God" finds its expression in Christ, whose self-giving love reconciles all that exists.

Central to these biblical insights is the conviction that the world and all creation belong to God. Contrary to modern assumptions which vest ownership of the earth in human hands, the Bible declares that "Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine" (Job 41:11). (See also Psalm 24:1, 50:12, Exodus 19:5, Deuteronomy 10:14). These truths became the basis for such Old Testament traditions as the Sabbath and the laws for the Jubilee Year.

"The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine," reads

Leviticus 25:23. The Jubilee passages, giving instructions for the redistribution of land and wealth, rest on the belief that creation is not a possession to be seized by humanity, but a gift belonging to God.

While setting forth these pictures of creation's integrity, the biblical vision also underscores the break in relationship within humanity and between humanity and the rest of creation resulting from sin.
The passages in the beginning of Genesis describing humanity's disobedience to God display the resulting alienation from the earth. Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden which they were commanded to "serve and keep" (Genesis 2:15). Moreover, Cain's murder of Abel causes his "blood to cry out from the ground" (4:10). Cain becomes a fugitive severed from a fruitful relationship to the earth.

The obvious ecological consequences of sin are echoed throughout the Old Testament. "The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes ..." (Isaiah 24:5). Hosea laments the mourning of the earth, and the languishing of the beasts, birds, and fish because of humanity's unfaithfulness and sin (Hosea 4:3; for similar examples see Isaiah 5:8-10; Jeremiah 12:4).

In the New Testament there is a vision of the Reign of God as the fulfilment of God's intention for the creation. Although at the present time it is hidden in suffering, it is also manifest in the experiences of healing and wholeness in which both women and men participate. The healing stories in the Gospels are to be seen as the healing of creation marred by human sin. Eyes are opened; lepers are cleansed; paralysis is healed; out of the mud of the earth, new eyes are created (John 9:6) emphasizing the creative dependency between human beings and the earth (adam and adama) as in the old creation stories. Creation is healed and restored when marginalized women and men form the new community in Christ.

This salvation brought about by Jesus is thus manifest in the physical and spiritual experience of a renewed life. The women in the healing stories often suffer from physical afflictions, and are considered by the society of that time as impure. They also are marginalized and treated as outcasts (Mark 5:22-43; Luke 13:10-17). However, Jesus makes them full persons, who are healed and empowered to participate. In some of the stories, their wholeness is given in the promise of shalom: "go in peace". It is a transition from non-belonging to belonging, from alienating impurity to integration, from brokenness to wholeness, from oppression to freedom.

The Reign of God as the fulfillment of God's intention for the creation is made concrete in the healing actions of Jesus. Jesus commissions his disciples to proclaim the reality of God's reign and to be engaged in its healing and reconciling reality. In regard to the resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the reality of the Kingdom is made known in the gathering together of the new community which is inclusive of all peoples. Thus the Reign of God gives birth to the "ekklesia".

In his letter to the Galatians, Paul reminds them of their baptismal experience and obligation. In baptism they are all renewed into oneness in Christ, into an alternative community, with the potential to overcome the

visions and discriminations, often leading to oppression, that are otherwise posed on them. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor ee, there is neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:26-28). Paul speaks of this conciliation as a new creation: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, there a new creation..." (2 Cor 5:16f).

In Romans 8:18-28, the setting free of the creation is linked with the surrection of human bodies and the manifestation of the children of God. Corinthians 15:20-25 and 51-57, Ephesians 1:9-10, 15-23, 2 Pet 3:5-13, and ny other New Testament passages, show the intimate connection between the lvation of human beings and the renewal, reconstitution and reordering of e whole universe.

Of course, this does not mean that the human and the extra-human aspects creation are of the same level of worth or value in the eyes of God. What atters is the continuity and integrity between the two, not their comparative orth. There are occasions when humanity has to choose between the conflicting nterests of a human person and that of a tree or an animal. There is thus oth continuity and tension; and there are no a priori categories which fit very occasion.

The tension of continuity and surprise is present in the stories where he risen Christ appears to his disciples. His "bodily" appearance is mphasized, so that he can be recognized (Luke 24:36-43; John 20:19-29). The ouple at Emmaus know him in the breaking of the bread. But the moment they ecognize him, he vanishes; and they are left with the concrete element of the roken bread - probably an allusion to the eucharist (Luke 24:13-35; cf. John 1:9-14). In the eucharist by the Holy Spirit the material elements, bread and ine, reveal Jesus' continous presence among them.

Thus the separation of transcendence and immanence is a denial not only f the incarnation of Christ but also of the resurrection. The divine presence f the risen Christ is still to be received in material things - in "fruits of he earth and human labour".

As we elevate the bread and wine, we proclaim again the presence of hrist in and for the world. We reaffirm the divine presence with the material orld of human existence. We are reminded of our utter dependence upon the just sharing of human labour, food, drink and the material substance of the orld. We, therefore, proclaim our unity as human beings in our common need for each other and for the integration of creation. As we break the bread together, we celebrate the sanctification of the material world of which the read and we ourselves are part; the world of soil, water and air, of forests, ountains and lakes; a world continually bearing new life, nourishing, nurturing, rejoicing, aging, suffering, grieving, dying and revealing God.

Although Jesus Christ constitutes the focal point of the Biblical doctrine of the creation, the Trinitarian context is fundamental. The creation in its original and continuous phases, including its restoration and renewal, is the result of the one act of the Holy Trinity which, as the Creed so eloquently summarizes, proceeds from the Father, is actualized through the Son and completed in the Holy Spirit. This Trinitarian perspective is often concealed in the Christological focus of the Bible, as, for instance, in such

pivotal statements of the New Testament as the opening verses of John's Gospel or the Pauline affirmation that all things are through him and for him.

The Integrity of Creation

Background and Intensions

The term "integrity of creation" is new for the Christian churches. It emerged in the Vancouver Assembly deliberations of the World Council of Churches. Several meetings have begun to explore the meaning of the term. The present work is a continuation of this process. The term is not without its difficulties, particularly when it is translated into some other languages. Yet, it is evocative of many meanings and, potentially, an appropriate expression of the Gospel for our age.

This document does not aim to give final definitions. Rather, the term is viewed as one which encourages the churches to reflect imaginatively on the whole doctrine of creation and its meaning for our particular moment in history. With this in view, the document presents here several aspects of the term.

Dependence upon the Creator

First and foremost, the integrity of creation causes us to reaffirm the truth that all that exists, visible and invisible, has God for its author. This not only implies the entire dependence of the creation upon its Creator, but also connotes something about the worth and dignity of the creation itself, whose life is thus sustained and held dear.

The Interrelatedness of All that Is

The integrity of creation implies that every creature is bound to every other creature in a great community and communion of being. It is particularly important for human beings to learn this truth, for we have thought ourselves apart, above, separate. But we are part of the totality, sharing with all other living beings their creaturehood, with its limitations and its possibilities. Nor are we strangers to the material world; we too are "flesh" (Is.40:11), we too receive our life, daily, at the hands of our Maker (Ps. 104: 29-30).

Wholeness

The term integrity of creation suggests a perspective of wholeness. It militates against narrowness and parochialism. It impells us to search for meaning in our total environment, not only in our local communities, our nations, our regions and continents, but globally - indeed, universally. The term presses towards an inclusiveness that human beings have, perhaps, only just begun to explore.

The Stewardship of Creation

In this term, we hear that the human species is called to employ its wisdom and creative skills in all fields of endeavour - industry, economics, politics, science, art - under the impulse of a strong sense of stewardship.

ccording to the Scriptures, stewardship, far from being a merely utilitarian nd managerial metaphor, assumes as its basis a solidarity with all for which he steward is responsible and answerable, and it issues in a life of service nd sacrifice. In all that we do and are, we are to offer ourselves acramentally to God, to one another, and to the world God loves.

ommitment

While it has special application to the natural world, the term ntegrity of creation reminds us of human society as well, which is part of ature in the broadest sense. It reminds us, too, of social evils such as acism, sexism, unfair land distribution, political oppression by dominant roups, and other manifestations of the human sin of separation and pride. ilitarism and the prospect of nuclear conflagration simply do not accord with vision of an integrated creation. As we respond to the groans of creation, e shall find ourselves drawn into a struggle, together with that Spirit which restles with our human spirits, for the liberation and transfiguration of the reation in all of its parts. The voiceless, human and others, should find their voice and be heard, the marginalized a place, and endangered species a champion. Our commitment to 'the integrity of creation' is a commitment to life in the midst of this world's kingdoms of death.

Hope

The integrity of creation is also an expression of Christian hope. This hope is undertaken in the midst of a world that is fragmented, distorted and threatened daily by many foes of life, visible and invisible. The creation is still in the grasp of sin, still prone to "nothingness". In the pollution of the biosphere, rampant deforestation and desertification, the stockpiling of nuclear wastes, the erosion of arable lands and many other phenomena, we see more than enough evidence of the vulnerability of the world and of human civilization. But the Gospel enables us to hope. These tokens of disintegration are not inevitable. Change, while neither automatic nor assured, is possible. And changes are happening. There are so many movements, Christian and other, which bear witness to God's continuing activity and are real signs of hope.

Solidarity and Fulfilment

Finally, the integrity of creation speaks to us as members of 'the body of Christ.' Through the One who loved "the world" (John 3:16), we are enabled to love and to embrace with compassion the whole creation. We are beginning to know the meaning of this love. Like the love of God by which it is enabled, love also involves suffering for 'the other' - and 'the other' understood, now, as inclusive of other species, not only of our own kind. In this solidarity with the whole, in the love of Christ, we shall find our own human fulfilment as well.

The Role of the Churches

Repentance

The churches can fulfil their vocation to solidarity and compassion only

when they begin with repentance. As Christians, we confess that we have failed to realize the breadth of our vocation and have yielded to restrictive visions of our calling. The egocentrism and ethnocentrism of our pursuits have been exposed in our time as, perhaps, never before. By our neglect, if not also in positive ways, we have contributed to the emergence of a consumerist and anthropomorphic world view which denigrates both matter and the extrahuman species. Without knowing it (yet never in total innocence) we have even employed the Bible and our various traditions of doctrine to support prevailing patterns within triumphalistic and imperialistic societies. If we are to fulfil our prophetic calling, we churches shall have to become more critical of our past than we have tended to be, and alter in sometimes drastic ways our present programs and lifestyles.

The Common Search

When we are faithful to our calling, the church's testimony to creation is one of gratitude for being, and for the promise of the fullness of being. We are enabled, through faith, to see creation moving towards transfiguration and fulfillment, reflecting the eternal mystery of the Triune God. This is not our own wisdom or insight, it too is a gift. The First article of the Creeds can only be confessed truly and proclaimed faithfully in the light of the Second and Third articles.

It is, however, essential for the churches today to realize, as they have not always done heretofore, the reality and significance of that preliminary but persistent groping after transcendence that is proper to humankind as such, and never absent from the human spirit (Acts 17). Being created in God's image and likeness, the human being, irrespective of credal commitments, carries within itself a sense of dependency, a quest for wholeness, and a feeling for the inviolable sacredness of life. Humanity can be addressed. It is never quite cut off from its Source and Ground. Thus, in order to achieve a truly integral vision of creation, it is vital that the churches involve themselves in a diaconic service, in whose performance they are prepared to work with all who are concerned for life, for its enhancement.

The Liturgy of Creation

The true vocation of the human person is to be the priest of creation - to stand before the Creator on behalf of all creation (intercession), and in turn to interpret the good intention of the Creator to and for all.

For the churches, it is important not only to promote this calling in a general way, but to give it specific form and visibility in worship and in worldly service. In doing this, the Church will realize its own vocation as a community of healing.

Authentic liturgy is doxological, recapitulating the destiny of all creation in the praise of the Creator. Likewise it is sacramental, lifting up the unity of creation, incarnation, sacrament and service. "The Word became flesh." The Vancouver Assembly of the World Council of Churches (1983) spoke of this as the "eucharistic vision." We are to remember, however, that such expressions ought not to be reduced to mere ecclesial institutions and their practices. The eucharistic vision can be enjoyed only by communities of faith

hich learn how to bear the cross, to suffer with a "groaning creation". It is he very life of the world, in all of its mystery and promise, that lies at he heart of our mission today.

CONCULSION

The integrity of creation provides an effective way to open up new erspectives for seeing issues of justice and peace. This is not to say that he demand for justice and the need to save our world from a nuclear holocaust an wait till the ecological issues are resolved. An adequate understanding of he integrity of creation provides a more effective way of dealing with all he crises of humanity, all the global issues of injustice and war, waste and xploitation, nuclear testing and the oppression of women, and a host of other roblems which confront humanity.

The JPIC process is meant to be one in which all the churches and hristians join hands with each other and with all people of goodwill on a esolute advance to work with God in order to make the Integrity of Creation, ith Justice and Peace, more of a reality. God is at work. In God is our trust nd hope.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the primary aim of the consultation was to explore the meaning of "the integrity of creation", there was no systematic attempt to work on a list of recommendations. However, from time to time there were suggestions for further study and action, and it was agreed that these should be included as a part of the report.

I. - We invite all Churches and Christians to reflect on the integrity of creation and to express their faith in concrete commitments to work for the integrity of creation. In so doing, we will discover ways of confessing our faith together that are both timely and faithful to our best traditions. At the same time, we also need to work with peoples of other faiths and ideologies so that we may strive together for a world where the integrity of creation, justice and peace will be visible.

For the churches, this would involve among others:

- an analysis of the structures of sin that are evident in their own society and in the world so that we concentrate on structural changes and influence decisions in the field of public policy making.

- an integration of environmental concerns into church educational programmes and curricula in the areas of formal and non-formal education.

- to establish commissions or committees in the churches and councils of churches to deal with the concern for the integrity of creation and pay special attention to the issues raised by science and technology.

In particular, we ask the women in each church to identify those structures of sin that exploit nature and oppress women and other marginalized groups in their societies and to work for justice and the liberation of creation.

We also request that women in the churches make these issues a priority during the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women and that they share information on actions taken with the JPIC process and the WCC office in Geneva.

We request the churches to inform themselves intentionally about the issues of indigenous Peoples. This process must include extensive dialogue with the indigenous Peoples themselves so that the churches participate fully in the struggles of Indigenous Peoples.

The efforts of the churches to be actively engaged in exposing the ideologies of profit and exploitation that undergird modern Western science and technology would be an important part of the churches' solidarity with Indigenous Peoples.

In identifying issues in each local context and cultural situation and in working out appropriate responses and forms of action to defend the integrity of creation, the churches must be ready to take risks.

II. - For Further Study and Action within the WCC

The following questions raised during the consultation call for further study within the JPIC process:

. Energy: its just use and distribution;

. The physical environment: an integrated approach to air, land and water issues that would focus on acid rain, the poisoning of ground waters and ways of recycling what it commonly considered as "waste" or garbage.

. Our respect for God's creation implies that we should not abuse or cause the suffering of individual animals. Attention is drawn particularly to vivisection, and the non-necessary use of animals in scientific experimentation.

. Life-related issues, and in particular:

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genetic engineering: human, plant and animal engineering, as well as bacteriological (biological) modification for military purposes.

reproductive technology, including in-vitro fertilization and emphasis on technological approaches to the problem of infertility to the detriment of normal medical approaches to this problem.

ethical practices related to contraception with specific reference to the abuse of technology in meeting population targets, taking away the right to informed choices;

the implications of high technological approaches to medicine and medical care that can lead not only to the consideration of the person as object, but also to excessively high costs for a few and lack of adequate health care for all.

5. Analysis of the economical aspect of the integrity of creation.

5. An international consultation of Indigenous Peoples that would have, among others, a focus on the understanding of creation from Indigenous perspectives.

3. A "second world" consultation on the integrity of creation highlighting the particular issues in this area in the socialist countries.

9. It is recommended that the offices and consultations of the WCC and of the churches - in as far as this is not being done already - use recycled paper. This would be a practical step to alleviate the consequences of our violence to nature (saving of energy and water, protection of water and forests) and to enhance the credibility of the churches' commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

10. Recognizing the considerate amount of work that the WCC has already done, or is planning to do with regard to the integrity of creation, we recommend that the relevant work of the sub-units of the WCC be channeled to the churches through the JPIC process and that the work initiated during this consultation be systematically pursued.

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Granvollen, Norway, Feb. 24 - March 4, 1988

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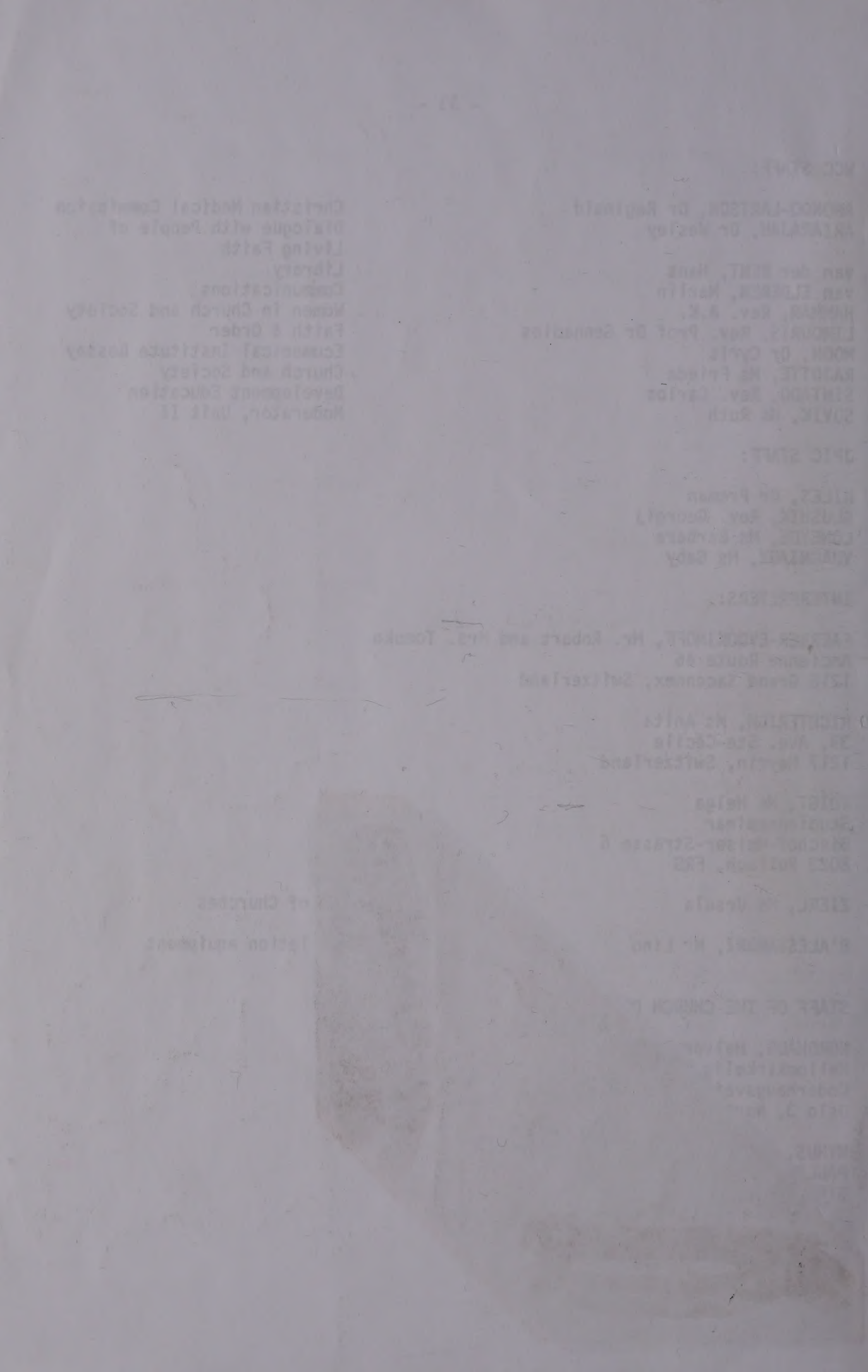
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